

What is claimed is:

1 A camera-based system for capturing images of a target area

comprising:

5 a generally horizontally extending boom assembly, said boom assembly being positioned above a target area;

at least one digital camera mounted on said boom assembly at a location spaced from the plane of said target area, said at least one digital camera being oriented so that the field of view thereof encompasses said target area; and

10 a controller in communication with said at least one digital camera, said controller receiving image data from said at least one digital camera and processing said image data to form a digital image of said target area.

15 2. A system according to claim 1 wherein said boom assembly is positioned above the midpoint of said target area.

3. A system according to claim 2 wherein said boom assembly has a length of from about 30 to 50 inches.

20 4. A system according to claim 3 wherein said boom assembly includes a wall mount, a boom extending outwardly from said wall mount and a camera head on a distal end of said boom, said camera head supporting said at least one digital camera.

25 5. A system according to claim 4 wherein said wall mount is releasably coupled to a wall plate secured to a wall surface.

30 6. A system according to claim 4 wherein said boom assembly is articulated and is moveable between an extended operating position and a folded retracted condition.

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7. A system according to claim 6 wherein said boom assembly includes a pair of hinges at spaced locations along said boom to enable said boom to fold over itself.
8. A system according to claim 7 wherein each of said hinges includes a locking mechanism to retain said boom assembly in said extended operating position.
9. A system according to claim 4 wherein said camera head supports a plurality of digital cameras, each of said digital cameras having a field of view that encompasses a distinct section of said target area, fields of view of adjacent digital cameras overlapping slightly.
10. A system according to claim 9 wherein said camera head supports a pair of digital cameras.
11. A system according to claim 9 wherein said camera head supports three digital cameras.
12. A system according to claim 9 wherein said camera head supports a single digital camera.
13. A system according to claim 12 wherein said digital camera appliance is pivotally mounted on said camera head and is moveable about an arc to capture images of distinct sections of said target area, images of adjacent distinct sections of said target overlapping.
14. A system according to claim 1 wherein said controller is coupled to a computer network and uses resources of said computer network.
15. A system according to claim 14 wherein said controller uses storage, printing, distribution and/or remote viewing resources of said computer network.

16. A system according to claim 2 wherein said controller has Internet server capabilities and is coupled to a distributed computer network to allow said digital image to be accessed by a user through an Internet browser.
- 5 17. A system according to claim 16 wherein said controller is a dedicated appliance.
18. A system according to claim 16 wherein said controller is a personal computer.
- 10 19. A system according to claim 16 wherein said controller sends said digital image to a designated secondary storage location in said distributed computer network.
- 15 20. A system according to claim 16 wherein said controller includes a display to present the digital image.
21. A system according to claim 16 wherein said controller processes image data received from said at least one digital camera to yield high contrast pen strokes on a white or empty background.
- 20 22. A system according to claim 21 wherein said pen strokes are in colour.
23. A camera-based system for capturing images of a target area
- 25 comprising:
- a boom assembly adapted to extend outwardly from a generally vertical surface;
- at least one digital camera mounted on said boom assembly at a location spaced from said surface, said at least one digital camera being oriented so
- 30 that the field of view thereof encompasses said target area; and
- a controller in communication with said at least one digital camera, said controller conditioning said at least one digital camera to acquire an image of

said target area, said image acquired by said at least one digital camera being conveyed to said controller and processed to form a digital image of said target area, said digital image being accessible to a user through a web client application.

- 5 24. A system according to claim 23 wherein said controller automatically publishes said digital image.
25. A system according to claim 24 wherein said controller also sends said digital image to a designated secondary storage location.
- 10 26. A system according to claim 24 wherein said controller processes image data received from said at least one digital camera to reduce the size of said digital image.
- 15 27. A system according to claim 26 wherein said image data is processed to yield high contrast pen strokes on a white or empty background.
28. A system according to claim 27 wherein said controller saves said digital image in a selected format.
- 20 29. A system according to claim 28 wherein said selected format is a .JPEG format.
30. A system according to claim 27 wherein said controller includes a display to present the digital image.
- 25 31. A system according to claim 23 wherein said boom assembly includes a wall mount, a boom extending outwardly from said wall mount and a camera head on a distal end of said boom, said camera head supporting said at least one digital camera.
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33. A system according to claim 31 wherein said boom assembly is articulated and moveable between an extended operating position and a folded retracted condition.

35. A system according to claim 34 wherein each of said hinges includes a locking mechanism to retain said boom assembly in said extended operating position.

36. A system according to claim 31 wherein said camera head supports a plurality of digital cameras, each of said digital cameras having a field of view that encompasses a distinct section of said target area, fields of view of adjacent digital cameras overlapping slightly.

37. A system according to claim 36 wherein said camera head supports a pair of digital cameras.

38. A system according to claim 36 wherein said camera head supports three digital cameras.

39. A system according to claim 36 wherein said camera head supports a single digital camera.

40. A system according to claim 39 wherein said digital camera is pivotally mounted on said camera head and is moveable about an arc to capture images of distinct sections of said target area, images of adjacent distinct sections of said target overlapping.

42. A camera-based system for capturing images of a target surface comprising:

a boom assembly positioned above said board and extending outwardly from said wall in a generally horizontal disposition;

a controller in communication with said at least one digital camera and having Internet server capabilities, said controller being responsive to user input and conditioning said at least one digital camera to acquire an image of said target area, said image acquired by said at least one digital camera being conveyed to said controller and processed to form an electronic image of said target area, said electronic image being published automatically to allow said electronic image to be accessed by a user through a web client application.

44. A system according to claim 43 wherein said controller also sends said electronic image to a designated secondary storage location.

45. A system according to claim 44 wherein said controller processes image data received from said at least one digital camera to reduce the size of said digital image.

46. A system according to claim 45 wherein said image data is processed to yield high contrast pen strokes on a white or empty background.

47. A system according to claim 46 wherein said controller saves said
5 electronic image in a selected format.

48. A system according to claim 47 wherein said controller includes a display to present the electronic image.

10 49. A system according to claim 42 wherein said boom assembly includes a wall mount, a boom extending outwardly from said wall mount and a camera head on a distal end of said boom, said camera head supporting said at least one digital camera appliance.

15 50. A system according to claim 49 wherein said boom assembly has a length of from about 30 to 50 inches.

20 51. An image publication and distribution method comprising the steps of:
acquiring an image of a target area that includes information recorded on said target area;
processing said image to form an electronic black on white image of the information recorded on said target area; and
automatically publishing said electronic image to allow said electronic image to be accessed by a user through a web client application.

25 52. The method of claim 51 further comprising the step of forwarding said electronic image to a secondary location for storage.

30 53. The method of claim 51 wherein during said processing said image data is processed to yield high contrast pen strokes on a white or empty background.

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55. The method of claim 53 wherein said high contrast pen strokes are in
5 colour.

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